

Washington, DC -- In the spirit of bipartisanship, Congressmen Vern Buchanan (R-FL 13) and Tim Mahoney (D-FL 16) announced today that the House Appropriations Committee has approved \$1 million in federal funding they sought for important projects in Charlotte County. The Committee this week approved \$300,000 to help preserve historical county artifacts, \$500,000 for improvements to US 41, and \$200,000 for capital improvements to the county's Family Resource Center.

"These projects were identified by community leaders as important priorities that will benefit the general public," said Buchanan. "We have cleared a significant hurdle. I will continue to work with Congressman Mahoney to win final approval of federal funding for these important projects."

"Parts of Charlotte County are still recovering from damage caused by Hurricane Charlie. This funding will help deliver much-needed improvements to public safety, services, and infrastructure. I will continue to fight to keep this vital funding in the bill and make sure it comes home to our community," said Congressman Tim Mahoney.

The fiscal year 2008 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act includes \$300,000 sought by Buchanan and Mahoney to support Charlotte County's efforts to preserve regional artifacts of historical significance.

"Historical archives of regional and national significance are currently scattered throughout the county," said Buchanan. "This funding would help collect, archive, digitize, and house these documents in a regional library making it accessible to students, teachers, and other researching the region."

"Much of our irreplaceable historical material was lost during the 2004 hurricane season. I commend Charlotte County for the efforts to preserve and protect the historical artifacts from our community. Preserving our history creates a strong sense of community here in Charlotte. This funding will be used to archive and provide electronic access to this important information for generations to come," said Congressman Tim Mahoney.

The fiscal year 2008 House Transportation, Housing and Urban development Appropriations Act includes \$500,000 for improvements to US 41 from SR-776 to the City of North Port. The federal funding would help widen the five-mile stretch from four to six lanes, modify a number of existing intersections, upgrade traffic signals, and improve the drainage system.

“US 41 is too congested and additional traffic is anticipated,” said Buchanan. “This project would increase safety and capacity to better serve this growing community, as well as motorists from Sarasota County and the City of North Port.”

“US 41 is a vital hurricane evacuation route. This funding will help Charlotte County improve and expand US 41 to improve safety for the entire region,” said Congressman Tim Mahoney.

The bill also includes \$200,000 in Economic Development Initiative funding for capital improvements to Charlotte County’s new Family Services Center.

“The center allows the area’s non-profit agencies to collaborate on resources and coordinate activities for families,” said Buchanan. “The federal funding in this bill would help expand the building to provide additional children’s programming and strengthen the facility, which will also serve as a temporary shelter in the event of a natural disaster.”

“This funding will help expand services and programming for Charlotte County families and youth, including Boys & Girls Clubs, 4-H programs, and the Police Athletic League after school program. The center will also improve its ability to serve as a shelter during a natural disaster,” said Congressman Tim Mahoney.

The funding bills are expected to be brought to the floor of the House next week.